MUSICAL CONTENTS AND SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION IN SOFIA GUBAIDULINA’S “TWO PATHS: A DEDICATION TO MARY AND MARTHA”

DMA DOCUMENT

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Young-Mi Lee, M.Ed.

*****

The Ohio State University

2007

Document Committee:

Professor Jan Radzynski, Adviser

Professor Donald Harris

Professor Margarita Mazo

Approved by

Adviser

Music Graduate Program
Sofia Gubaidulina has been known for using symbolic devices in her music to express her Christian belief. *Two paths: A Dedication to Mary and Martha* for two violas and orchestra (1998) effectively represents Gubaidulina’s musical aesthetic which is based on the idea of dichotomy. In the wide stretch over various genres, many pieces reflect her dual worldview that implies an irreconcilable conflict between the holy God and the worldly human. She interprets her vision of contradictory attributes between divinity and mortality, one celestial and the other earthly, by creating and applying musical symbols. Thus, Gubaidulina employs the concept of binary opposition as many of her works involve extreme contrasts, conflicts, and tension.

In this document I will analyze the musical content in detail. Then I will examine the symbolic devices in terms of dichotomy, which explains how Gubaidulina uses the same musical metaphor in her works and how she employs and develops the musical devices to represent her religious vision. I expect that those findings of my study would explain the symbolic aspect of the music of Sofia Gubaidulina, music rooted in her spiritual insight.
Dedicated to my parents
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I praise my Lord who made it possible to complete this document.

I wish to thank my advisor, Jan Radzynski, for his encouragement, insight, enthusiasm, and patience in revising my writing. Without his help, I could not finish this study in the limited time. I am grateful to Donald Harris who always inspires me with his thoughtful comments. I also thank Margarita Mazo for her interest and guidance.

Many thanks to Alan Green and Michael Murray for their full support to get all the scores and recordings of Sofia Gubaidulina that became crucial resources to continue my study. I wish to express my thanks to my family and friends to whom I owe many prayers and warm encouragements that were the biggest motivation during this study.
VITA

January 1, 1971 ..................... Born – Seoul, Korea

1993 ............................. B.A. Music Composition,
Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea

1996 ............................. M.Ed. Music Education,
Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea

1996 – 1997 ....................... Instructor,
Yangjung Middle School, Seoul, Korea

1998 – 1999 ....................... Teacher,
Insung Girls’ Middle School, Incheon, Korea

2000 – 2001 ....................... Instructor,
Baekseok Arts Institute, Seoul, Korea

2003 – 2004 ....................... Graduate Teaching Associate,
The Ohio State University

PUBLICATION

Young-Mi Lee. “A Study for Systematic Instruction of Musical Composition”
Journal of Research in Music Education No.15 (Korean Music Educational Society, 1997)

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Music
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ................................................................................................................................................ ii
Dedication ........................................................................................................................................... iii
Acknowledgments .............................................................................................................................. iv
Vita ...................................................................................................................................................... v
List of Tables ...................................................................................................................................... vii
List of Figures ................................................................................................................................... viii
List of Examples ............................................................................................................................... ix

Chapters:
1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 1
2 Analysis of Two Paths .................................................................................................................. 9
   2.1 Formal structure ..................................................................................................................... 9
   2.2 Pitch material ....................................................................................................................... 12
   2.3 Rhythmic elements ............................................................................................................... 28
   2.4 Sound elements ................................................................................................................... 36
   2.5 Description of each variation ............................................................................................. 44
3 Symbolic interpretation ................................................................................................................ 54
   3.1 Dichotomy ............................................................................................................................ 55
   3.2 The cross .............................................................................................................................. 57
   3.3 Transfiguration .................................................................................................................... 60
4 Conclusion ....................................................................................................................................... 67
References ........................................................................................................................................ 72
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Formal division by two instrumental groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Instrumentation for orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Dynamic transition in each section</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Use of polyrhythm</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Structure of phrases and pauses in solo section</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Registeral cross by the two soloists</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Registeral cross by the orchestra</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Melodic cross motif</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Use of minor second</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Use of perfect fifth</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Use of major third</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Use of minor third</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Use of tritone</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Main motif and its development</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Three-note chromatic motif and its development</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Three-note diatonic motif and its development</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 Combination of m2 and M3 motif and its development</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10 Combination of P5 and TT motif</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11 Paring motif</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.12 Chordal motif</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13 Septuplet motif and its development</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.14 Use of triplet</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15 Use of quadruplet and quintuplet</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16 Use of septuplet</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.17 Use of polyrhythm</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.18 Tempo rubato and unmetered section</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.19 Use of flutter tonguing ................................................................. 39
2.20 Use of maximum dynamic ............................................................... 42
3.1 Timbral contrast between two soloists ............................................... 57
3.2 Timbral transformation in solo part .................................................... 62
3.3 Timbral contrast in solo part .............................................................. 63
3.4 Timbral transformation of viola 2 ....................................................... 63
3.5 Transfiguration of viola 1 ................................................................. 64
3.6 Timbral transformation in tutti part .................................................... 65
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sofia Gubaidulina has become one of the most acclaimed composers in recent years, earning reputation in the world. Just as two former Soviet composers, Alfred Schnittke and Edison Denisov, Gubaidulina has defined her own musical territory. Her musical style has been described as avant-garde, symbolic, mystical, exotic, and as a hybrid of western and eastern tradition. Gubaidulina is a professed Russian Orthodox Christian, famous for representing religious messages throughout her music. Other than these prominent philosophical aspects, her music also has strong artistic qualities such as dramaturgical content, masterful orchestration, subtle use of tone color, and structural balance. Gubaidulina has also developed new compositional methods based on mathematical logic and unusual sound generation, which renders her music rational, objective, and innovative. This combination of spiritual and intellectual qualities, systematically balanced, makes outstanding constitution of Gubaidulina’s music.

Sofia Gubaidulina was born in Chistopol in the Tartar Republic in 1931. She studied composition at the Kazan Conservatory and Moscow Conservatory. Under the political repression in the Soviet Union, her musical creativity was restrained by government censorship. Her music had been banned from a public performance by the
government because it dealt with subject matter other than socialist realism and employed western avant-garde techniques. From the early 1980s, especially by her work *Offertorium* (1980, revised in 1982 and 1986) dedicated to violinist Gidon Kremer, Gubaidulina’s music has been recognized and earned acclaim in western countries. In 1975-1981, she was a member of Astreya, an improvisational group playing folk instruments, with Vyacheslav Artyomov and Viktor Suslin.

Gubaidulina’s musical style and aesthetic has evolved over the years. In the 1970s, she focused on interval and timbre as central concepts, and experimented with a non-traditional method of sound production or uncommon combinations of instruments. In the 1980s, she was interested in rhythm and proportion, as she says, “I became preoccupied with completely different concepts – in particular, with issues of the rhythm of form....Fibonacci series was crucial in my experiments with musical form in the 1980s...The Golden Section is a fantastic proportion.... I was greatly inspired.”\(^1\) The Golden ratio and Fibonacci series have been her basic structural principle and continued in the 1990s with an expanded approach to the other additive series.

Above all, the music of Gubaidulina has been distinguished by its religious symbolism. According to her, composing music is a religious act that connects an individual with God as she says in the interview with Caroline M. Askew, “Religion is a link with God. Essentially the artistic work, the artistic act, fulfils this task.”\(^2\) For Gubaidulina, the purpose of her composition is to reveal her theological vision and

---

religious message. Musical symbols in her music are important means to represent the
metaphysical ideas to be realized by sound.

Gubaidulina experienced social conditions of former Soviet Union in which
freedom of expression was restricted. This limited circumstance may be an important
factor of her symbolism, which forced her to invent hidden metaphors as means of
representing her religious issues. Another influence on her spirituality may stem from
her diverse cultural and religious family heritage of Judaism, Islam, Russian Orthodoxy,
and Roman Catholicism. Among others, however, Gubaidulina’s personal devotion to
Christian belief would be a major source that inspires the quality of such an intense,
meditative, and profound essence in her music. For Gubaidulina, music can be a medium
to reflect her belief in God, as she says, “all my works are religious. As I understand it,
I’ve never written non-religious pieces.”

Thus, symbolism concludes the most essential
nature in the music of Gubaidulina, which inspires both her philosophical and
compositional strategy.

Gubaidulina is a versatile composer whose works encompass a wide range of
genres and media, from *Vivente-Non Vivente* for electronics (1970) to *Johanness-Passion*
for soprano, tenor, baritone, bass, two mixed choirs, organ, and large orchestra (2000).
Her preference of particular instruments such as bayan (Russian accordion) and low
strings contributes to develop new instrumental effects and create unique combination of
sounds. It is also noticeable that many of her works set for an unusual ensemble of
instruments: organ and percussion (*Detto I*), saxophone quartet and six percussion (*In
Erwartung*), and seven cellos and two waterphones (*On the Edge of Abyss*). In *Alleluja

---

for mixed chorus, boy soprano, organ and large orchestra (1990), Gubaidulina experiments with light and color treated as the important thematic elements. Thus, Gubaidulina’s works indicate her effort to discover new sound materials and diverse orchestration techniques.

Two Paths: A Dedication to Mary and Martha for two solo violas and symphony orchestra (1998), commissioned by Tomoko Masur, was premiered by Cynthia Phelps and Rebecca Young, and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kurt Masur on April 29, 1999. In the program note, Gubaidulina comments that the setting for two violas and orchestra inspired her with the concept of the piece:

From the very outset I appreciated that the soloists would be two identical string instruments manifesting themselves through two female personas. Under the circumstances it was entirely natural to choose a theme familiar from centuries of artistic experiences, the theme of two types of love – of Mary and of Martha.  

Gubaidulina also indicates her use of symbolic devices to express the abstract theme in the music:

Naturally, music doesn’t convey these metaphysical stimuli to us literally and directly. That isn’t its job. It is, however, capable of creating a metaphor, a kind of comparison concealed from the concrete. For example, sounds moving in different directions, motion upwards or downwards, already can constitute a sufficiently definable metaphor of

---

two differing psychological directions, two paths into the unknown forest of the perpetual variety of life.⁵

Two Paths is a double concerto written in a seven-variation form, covering approximately 24 minutes of performance time. Several reviews on the performance commented that Two Paths expresses Gubaidulina’s supreme craftsmanship in the genre:

In “Two Paths”, a dialogue between two violas and orchestra, the shrieks, groans and chattering seemed to take the human voice as model.... “Two Paths” operates as question-and-answer: orchestra as interrogator, often hectoring; the violists more placatory. Separating solo instruments by nature not that resonant from their large partners resolves the uneven balance of power.⁶

The viola has a husky, sunset sound and here a pair of them engage in obscurely passionate dialogue, now coiling themselves around each other, now pulling apart with enigmatic urgency. Their private drama is bathed in a lamplight glow from the orchestra.⁷

Interestingly, Two Paths differs from a traditional concerto style in terms of conventional heroic role usually assigned for the soloists. Like Introitus, concerto for

---

⁵ Sofia Gubaidulina. Ibid.
η=&pagewanted=1 (accessed May 2, 2007).
piano and chamber orchestra (1978), as Vera Lukomsky says “the solo piano part is purely meditative and completely deprived of virtuosity”\(^8\), the two solo violists in *Two Paths* also play a symbolic role with relatively reduced cadenza section. Instead of being accompanied by the orchestra, the soloists are independently united with the tutti as a whole. Thus, Gubaidulina emphasizes a symbolic aspect more than a technical aspect, which requires the soloists’ integration into the music rather than display of their virtuosic skills. Yet, this factor does not imply that the soloists’ part diminishes its importance or level of technique. As a matter of a fact, their identity as a medium of representing a profound spiritual message becomes more difficult to express in this philosophical and meditative concerto. Barbara Jepson points out this:

Sofia Gubaidulina’s *Two Paths* is a gripping, imaginatively conceived work, well-suited to the musical gifts and personalities of two remarkable performers..... Musically, *Two Paths* is not a virtuosic showpiece, but it makes considerable demands on the soloists. The Martha part has many difficult low trills in the netherworld of the viola range. Mary shows her ethereal, questing nature through ascending chromatic lines and whispery harmonics – high, pure tones of flutelike timbre.\(^9\)

Gubaidulina achieves not only philosophical value but also musical value in *Two Paths*. The religious and universal theme of different kinds of love is dramaturgically

---

\(^8\) Vera Lukomsky. Ibid:30

presented by the distinctive characterization of each part – viola 1, viola 2, and orchestra. The music exhibits the abstract concept effectively by Gubaidulina’s completely organized design, which enables this piece such powerful, balanced, and consistent experience. *Two Paths*, one of Gubaidulina’s masterpieces, contributes greatly to the twenty first century double concerto repertoire.

This document discusses the musical contents and the symbolic interpretation of *Two Paths*. In the next chapter, I analyze the musical elements and Gubaidulina’s compositional techniques in detail. In the following chapter, I examine her use of musical symbols which serve as fundamental devices in *Two Paths*. As in her other works, Gubaidulina employs several idiomatic techniques of representing religious subjects. In my interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the piece, I shall categorize three aspects: dichotomy, the cross, and transfiguration. I intend to use the term “dichotomy” as a comprehensive meaning that represents two opposing ideas; the celestial and the earthly as represented by Mary and Martha. This dichotomy, or binary opposition, has become the most essential principle which renders Gubaidulina’s music the dramatic contrast and tension. The cross and transfiguration, both implied in religious context, are also importantly treated in *Two Paths*, represented by unique symbolic devices. I shall also identify the roles and meanings of the three symbolic aspects effectively achieved in *Two Paths*.

In analyzing musical elements in *Two Paths*, I partially refer to Jan LaRue’s classification of ‘sound, harmony, melody, rhythm, and growth (SHMRG)’\(^\text{10}\) and John D.

---

White’s analytical method for ‘rhythm, melody, harmony, and sound elements’\(^\text{11}\).

Although both authors mention the same four aspects for the fundamental category, these methods lack formal aspect. Therefore, I include formal element as one of the main category because form as logically organized structure is a significant thematic component in Gubaidulina’s works. I integrate the harmony and melody into pitch element which offers a more comprehensive view for both materials. Thus, my analytical method defines four musical elements as pitch material, rhythm, sound, and form.

I use the octave designation system by numbers from C1 to C8. For interval description, I follow the traditional method as P5, m3, and etc, except for TT (diminished or augmented intervals). A bracket [ ] with numbers in it indicates a pitch-class set in the prime form of each motif. The abbreviation RN indicates rehearsal number.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF TWO PATHS

In this chapter, I will examine the musical contents of Two Paths in detail. I will also investigate Gubaidulina’s use of symbolic devices in terms of religious metaphors such as “the cross” and “transfiguration”\(^{12}\), rooted in the dichotomous viewpoint. With those symbolic representations, the composer embodies the musical interpretation of the religious subject.

2.1 Formal structure

Two Paths consists of seven variations based on an equivocal setting in which Gubaidulina establishes two contrasting objects in two dimensions: the orchestra against the soloists, and the first viola against the second viola. The interrelationship between them varies throughout the whole variations from conflict to harmony. Different from a traditional theme and variation form, Two Paths has no theme section presented at the beginning. Instead, Gubaidulina uses an extra musical concept that symbolizes two characterizations of love - of Mary and of Martha in the New Testament. In the program note Gubaidulina explains that “it is a theme of two ways of loving: the one, to love

\(^{12}\) The definition of the term in the context that Gubaidulina uses in her music will be discussed in the next chapter.
taking upon oneself worldly cares and by so doing ensure the foundation of life; and the other, to love dedicating oneself to the sublime, to experience together with the Beloved the route of terrible suffering to the cross, so as to procure light and blessing for life.”

In a form of concerto, Gubaidulina assigns the tutti and the solo part to play different roles; the orchestra initiates a series of dramatic situations to pose questions to the soloists, and the soloists should answer them. As Gubaidulina says, “the process of formulating such answers provides the premise of the composition, dictating its form. It presents itself as a chain of variations, during the course of which the relationship of the two solo personas – to each other as well as to the orchestra – changes.” The music realizes the theme of two different natures of love by symbolic gestures represented in the contrary motions by each viola, upward and downward.

The table below illustrates a structural outline of Two Paths. Each variation can be divided by two groups, the orchestra and the solo, as their parts diverge from each other. However, this initial separation becomes more integrated as the music develops. In variation IV, V, and VI the tutti and the solo are combined together rather than opposed.

---

13 Sofia Gubaidulina. Ibid.
14 Sofia Gubaidulina. Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Rehearsal numbers</th>
<th>Tempo (crotchet)</th>
<th>Duration (total 24’25”')</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>orchestra</td>
<td>1-56</td>
<td>1-11</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1’22’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>57-78</td>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1’10’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>orchestra</td>
<td>79-134</td>
<td>15-26</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1’15’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>135-187</td>
<td>27-36</td>
<td>60-72-80</td>
<td>2’10’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>orchestra</td>
<td>188-191</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>192-203</td>
<td>38-39</td>
<td>84-72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>orchestra</td>
<td>203-220</td>
<td>40-43</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>221-228</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>orchestra</td>
<td>228-233</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>233-236</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>orchestra</td>
<td>236-251</td>
<td>47-48</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Orchestra &amp; solo</td>
<td>252-334</td>
<td>49-65</td>
<td>60-72-84-60</td>
<td>3’57’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Orchestra &amp; solo</td>
<td>335-379</td>
<td>66-74</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1’36’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Orchestra &amp; solo</td>
<td>380-440</td>
<td>75-85</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1’25’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>orchestra</td>
<td>441-476</td>
<td>86-91</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>58’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>477-597</td>
<td>92-110</td>
<td>84-96-108-120</td>
<td>5’22’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>orchestra</td>
<td>596-636</td>
<td>110-116</td>
<td>120-144</td>
<td>1’07’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>637-647</td>
<td>117-118</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1’40’’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Formal division by two instrumental groups
In addition to this framework, I subdivide each variation into smaller sections by its musical events*. I shall investigate the musical features of each variation in the following pages (see 2.5 Description of each variation).

2.2 Pitch material

Gubaidulina uses pitch materials in extremely economic ways, based on only a few motivic units. In this chapter I shall discuss several intervals which function as the basis for main motifs and thematic elements. Then I shall present the main motifs and their development throughout the piece.

2.2.1 Interval

**Minor second (m2)**

An ascending m2 appears as a primary interval both melodically and harmonically, which forms the main motif (Motif 1). The original m2 (E-F) is introduced in the opening phrase by strings and woodwinds (Ex. a). In the first solo presentation, the m2 appears harmonically as C-Db (Ex. b). This motion by semitones frequently occurs: viola 1 moves up by a m2 while viola 2 moves down by a m2 (Ex. c). Both ascending and descending m2 apply to all instruments as the most rudimentary intervallic feature. The inversion, M7 is also used in various forms (Ex. d). The m2 is extended to the m9, as the variation develops and intensifies the main motif by a wide leap or glissando (Ex. e). The m2 is also used as an important harmonic device in various places throughout the piece (Ex. f).

* The sectional division is illustrated in Table 2.3 in page 40.
Ex. 2.1: Use of minor second

**Perfect fifth (P5)**

An ascending P5 is used as a secondary interval, which also constructs the main motif (Ex. a). The inversion, P4 appears in many spots (Ex. b). In variation III, both ascending and descending P5, functions as the basis of the main motif in the variation (Ex. c). The harmonic use of P5 also varies in many places (Ex. d).

Ex. 2.2: Use of perfect fifth
Major third (M3)

A M3 and a m6 are used as another important elements of pitch material. M3 appears as a main motivic cell in the solo part of variation II (Ex. a). The m6 constructs a part of the main motif in variation I as well as a harmonic element in variation III (Ex. b).

![Ex. 2.3: Use of major third](image)

Minor third (m3)

First presented in the soloists’ part in variation I, a m3 occurs in various forms including expansion (m10). Gubaidulina particularly utilizes a m3 as an important harmonic material for solo sections. Variation III exemplifies several applications of the interval of m3: motivic element (Ex. a), harmonic element (Ex. b), and glissando to the extended interval (Ex. c). The m6, the inversion of m3, appears in leaping motions in the solo part in variation II (Ex. d).

![Ex. 2.4: Use of minor third](image)
Ex. 2.4: continued

Tritone (TT)

An interval of tritone appears in various forms. The first use of the TT is its melodic application, which substitutes for the P4 in the previous phrase (Ex. a). In variation III, the tritone, combined with a P5 or P4, establishes the accompanying strings and the vibraphone chord (Ex. b). Another important use of the TT in variation III occurs in the pairing motif played by the solo viola (Ex. c). The harmonic use of the TT mostly appears in the last variation: the marimba sustains a tritone (Ex. d) and the other percussion generate two harmonic tritones (Ex. e).

Ex. 2.5: Use of tritone
2.2.2 Motif

Seven motivic cells, constructed by the primary intervals above, serve as main thematic elements in *Two Paths*. The original forms and their derivatives vary in each variation. Five motifs are closely related except for Motif 6 and Motif 7, derived from the same rhythmic units and pitch materials.

**Motif 1: Main motif [0,1,5]**

Motif 1 is a four-note cell (E-F-A-E) consisting of m2, m6, and P5, in which two subsets of a triplet sixteenth-note pattern are combined (Ex. a). First introduced by the orchestra in the opening bars (Ex. b), this motif mainly plays as a recurring motif throughout the whole variations. Motif 1 identifies the tutti part as it occurs in the opening bars of each variation except for variation IV and V. The prime motif develops rhythmically and intervallically in various forms: inversion (Ex. c), transposition (Ex. d), augmentation (Ex. e), and extension (Ex. f). The main motif occurs in several altered forms modified by the intervals. One is the third entrance in variation I. The cello and contrabass present the main motif in different intervallic structure of m2 and D3, E-F-D#-E. This form also appears in the last variation by the piccolo and the flute as G-Ab-F#-G. The second alteration of the main motif occurs in the opening bars of variation III, which is two subsets of m2 connected by P4 (G#-A-E-F). Another form of the alteration presented at RN 43 is comprised of m2, D3, and TT as C-Db-B-F. Example 2.6.g illustrates the three altered motifs.
a. intervals and two subsets

\[ \text{\textbf{Ex.2.6: Main motif and its development (continued)}} \]
Ex.2.6: continued

f. extension

![Sheet music example](image)

g. altered forms of the main motif

![Sheet music example](image)

**Motif 2-1: Three-note chromatic motif [0,1,2]**

The descending three-note chromatic motif (F-E-Eb) is first presented by the clarinets in the second section (a-1) of variation I (Ex. a). Usually in triplet, this motif serves as an important element in the next variations, both ascending and descending (Ex. b). The last phrase of the entire piece for the solo viola presents an extended three-note chromatic passage (Ex. c). The three-note chromatic motif is combined with the diatonic three-note motif in variation III, where the clarinet and strings create polyrhythmic figure in chromatic and diatonic motion (Ex. d). Another significant feature of the three-note chromatic motif appears with its harmonic function. In variation III and IV, a sequential passage from the trichord [0,1,2] irregularly produces a chordal effect (Ex. e). A cluster
use in the climax section in variation VI, in which all orchestra involve in doubling the cluster through whole diapason, intensively contributes to the dramatic tension (Ex. f). This motif constructs a descending seven-note chromatic scale ostinato, a main theme of viola 2 in the last variation (Ex. g).

Ex.2.7: Three-note chromatic motif and its development (continued)
Ex. 2.7: continued

d.

e.
Ex.2.7: continued

f.
Ex.2.7: continued

g.

Motif 2-2: Three-note diatonic motif [0,1,3]

A long diatonic passage by the two soloists and the accompanying orchestra characterizes variation III (Ex. a). This diatonic motif combines with the three-note chromatic motif as discussed in the above example (Ex.2.7.d). Diatonic scales increase more dynamics in the climax section (Ex. b).

Ex. 2.8: Three-note diatonic motif and its development (continued)
Ex. 2.8: continued

b.

Motif 3: Combination of m2 and M3 [0,1,5]

The three-note motif, consisting of a m2 and a M3 in the same rhythmic form of Motif 1, first appears in the solo part of variation II (Ex. a). With the original contour of both ascending m2 and M3, this motif is modified by inversion and prolongation in the next variations (Ex. b, Ex. c). An interesting metric change of Motif 3 from upbeat to downbeat occurs, also in a different rhythmic pattern by the soloists (Ex. d). In the last variation this motif serves as an important thematic unit for viola 1, by which the melody evolves into its climactic point (Ex. e).

a.

Ex. 2.9: Combination of m2 and M3 motif and its development (continued)
Motif 4: Combination of P5 and TT [0,1,6]

Motif 4, a combination of a P5 and a TT, appears only in variation III. The same rhythmic figure from Motif 1 – two sixteenth notes and one eighth note – and two consecutive leaps in the same direction comprise this motif. Motif 4 is used in pairs by two parts playing in opposite directions. This paring pattern occurs three times with different pairs of instruments (Ex. 2.10). The combination of P5 and TT develops into other forms including Motif 5 in the following variation.
Motif 5: Paring motif

Motif 5 appears only in variation IV as a thematic unit. First presented by the two soloists as question and answer, the paring motif recurs four times, twice by the soloists and twice by the solo flute and oboe. Each part of the pair contains the same contour of Motif 1, elaborated and extended by more intervals and dynamic expressions (Ex. 2.11).

Ex. 2.11: Paring motif

Motif 6: Chordal motif [0,3,7]

Variation V emphasizes harmonic quality mainly established by second-inversion minor triad ostinato. The undulating chordal progression by semitones creates polytonal
complexity of A minor (the celesta and viola) and C minor (the vibraphone), which is performed polyrhythmically in each part. More polychordal effects occur with three time appearances of Am, Cm, and Gm chords by other strings (Ex. a). The chordal motif, constructed by either one part or division, occurs in extended forms in variation VII (Ex. b).

Ex.2.12: Chordal motif (continued)
Motif 7: Septuplet motif

The septuplet motif dominates variation VI. Combined with strings pizzicato and irregular accents, this rhythmic motif distinctively characterizes this variation. The septuplet ostinato occurs in three different formats according to its subdivisions by the stressed syllables – 3:2:2, 2:2:3, and 2:3:2. Viola 2 develops the pattern with combination of rests, which also appears as three types – R:N:R, R:N:R, N:R:R (Ex. a). First introduced by the soloists, this motif applies to tutti strings and develops in more various forms (Ex. b).
a.  

\[
\begin{align*}
(2:2:3) & \quad (2:3:2) & \quad (3:2:2) \\
(R:N:R) & \quad (R:R:N) & \quad (N:R:R)
\end{align*}
\]

*R and N indicate rests and notes.

b.

Ex.2.13: Septuplet motif and its development

2.3 Rhythmic elements

I focus on several rhythmic materials used thematically or as a main rhythmic cell in the seven motifs. Triplet, quintuplet, septuplet, and polyrhythmic figures appear most frequently. I also discover rhythmic uncertainty and use of silence that serve as important elements in this piece.
**Triplet**

Triplets function as the most primary rhythmic cell. The main motif and the other motifs are constructed by triplet variations. Diverse uses of triplet appear throughout the entire piece as in the example below. The first section in variation II (RN 38-39) consists of a long legato passage built by only triplets (See Ex. 2.8.a).

![Ex.2.14: Use of triplet](image)

**Quadruplet and quintuplet**

Quintuplet also pervades the whole piece in various forms. A rhythmic conflict of quadruplet against quintuplet in a triple meter (3/4) appears in variation V providing a main figure in the solo part (Ex. a). In the climax of variation VII, quintuplet sounds distinctively by the horns and trumpets, conflicting with quadruplet as well (Ex. b). This quintuplet ostinato develops in the final tutti call (RN114-116), combined with octuplet pattern. Remarkably, the celesta plays a two-bar quintuplet ostinato following non-
metrical division (Ex. c). Quintuplet often combines with triplet as a rhythmic pattern. This combination of quintuplet and triplet appears both horizontally and vertically (Ex. d).

Ex.2.15: Use of quadruplet and quintuplet (continued)
Ex.2.15: continued

c.


d.
Septuplet

The most significant use of septuplet as a motivic element appears in variation VI (See Example 2.13). The other forms of septuplet are shown in several spots. Some septuplet patterns occur as a speed controlling element in a chromatic scale.

Ex.2.16: Use of septuplet

2.3.1 Polyrhythm

Gubaidulina utilizes polyrhythm as a main rhythmic feature in *Two Paths*. Throughout the whole piece, rhythmic complication increases as more parts involved in. The figures
below illustrate the polyrhythmic complexity of all different orchestral parts synchronized within one unit of the phrase.

In variation V, the accompanying orchestra plays a polyrhythmic ostinato in which each part moves in different metric unit (See Example 2.12.a). Polyrhythm also occurs as hemiola in the third variation: the clarinet and the second violin play in duple meter while the first violin plays in triple meter.
Ex.2.17: Use of polyrhythm

2.3.2 Non-metric rhythm

**General pause and fermata**

Gubaidulina utilizes a pause – general pause and fermata – as an important structural element. In variation I, a general pause detaches the solo from the tutti, as well as disconnects variation I from variation II. In the solo part of variation VII, a silence and a pause are the main thematic material, some designated by exact durations and the others not timed. The ostinato passage from RN 92 to RN97 consists of several short phrases, each ending with a four-second silence and a five-second pause of sustained sound. The next section continues alternating each soloist’s part without a pause, and then finally pauses before the seventh repetition of the viola 2 ostinato. The diagram below illustrates the detailed organization of each part in RN92 through RN109.
Fig. 2.2: Structure of phrases and pauses in the solo section of variation VII

**Tempo rubato and unmetered section**

Gubaidulina includes unmetered sections in the last variation. As seen in the above diagram, it applies to each cadential measure with either sound or silence. In addition to the unmetered section, the final soloists’ part includes several rubato passages. Thus, the soloists in the final stage obtain more rhythmic flexibility as they reach their goals at the end. Viola 1 plays rubato phrase four times each time in different length: 7” (b.568), 10” (b.595), 9” (b.637), 4”+5” (b.645-6). Viola 2, after six times of the ostinato phrase, presents the final two statements in nine-second rubato.

Ex.2.18: Tempo rubato and unmetered section
Rhythmic flexibility

Fluid and flexible rhythmic quality appears as one of Gubaidulina’s typical compositional methods, with which the composer persists to avoid metrical regularity. In Two Paths, she achieves rhythmic freedom by using a variety of tuplets (duplet through octuplet), frequent syncopation, hemiola, polyrhythm, pause, tempo rubato, change of metrical stress, irregular rhythm pattern, and continuous change of meter and tempo. The undulating motion in variation V distinctively represents another example of the fluid and extrametrical rhythmic figure (See Example 2.12.a).

2.4. Sound elements

2.4.1 Orchestration and timbre

Two Path is a large scale concerto for two solo violas and large orchestra. The instrumentation in the score is listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Number of players</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodwind</td>
<td>Piccolo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flutes (one doubling Bass Flute)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oboes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarinet in Eb</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarinets in Bb</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bass Clarinet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bassoon</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contrabassoon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>Horn in F</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet in Bb</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bass Trombone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in the above list, Gubaidulina sets a traditional arrangement for the orchestra. Yet, she includes interesting instruments such as contrabass trombone, celesta, and a variety of percussion. The contrabass trombone not only intensifies a lower register along with the tuba but also functions as a part of the other trombone parts. The large percussion, mostly metallic instruments including various bells and chimes, play an important role in producing the special sound and mystical atmosphere. The celesta also adds more timbral accents. The piano emphasizes its percussive quality, primarily contributing to sound effects by tremolo, glissando, and chordal cluster.

The strings and the solo violas utilize various extended non-traditional techniques. Glissando and tremolo appear most frequently throughout the whole piece. Pizzicato is

**Table 2.2: Instrumentation for orchestra**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percussion</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contrabass Trombone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timpani</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glockenspiel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibraphone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marimba (2 bass bows)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crotales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell Plates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimes/ Bar Chimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Gongs/ Tam Tam</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snare Drum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyboard</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celesta</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>String</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
used as an important thematic component in variation VI, particularly for the septuplet motif. Harmonics and sul ponticello apply only to the soloists. Only viola 1 plays the artificial 5th harmonics passage in variation I and variation V (RN 67-68), which brings a timbral change. Gubaidulina uses sul ponticello differently in three places, to generate a timbral contrast between the two violas: first, viola 1 in *sul pont.* and viola 2 in *sul tast* at the end of the fourth variation (RN 65); second, viola 1 in *pizz.* and viola 2 in *sul pont.* in the septuplet motif passage (RN 77); third, both viola 1 and viola 2 in *sul pont.* in the last variation (RN 89-91). She uses muted tutti strings effectively in two cases, one in variation V and the other in variation VII. In variation V, the strings in *con sordino* enhance the mysterious sonority along with the undulating other parts. At the bridge section of RN 89-91, the accompanying strings abruptly change their timbre and volume with muted sounds, which creates unexpected moment that dramatically increases the contrast between the tutti climax and the solo part.

Another interesting special technique is bowed marimba in the last variation: the two players generate the sound by rubbing the keys with bass bows, which creates a rich tritone resonance. Flutter tonguing for the woodwinds and brass appears twice: The first use of flutter tonguing occurs in the tutti part of variation I and II which functions as a timbral accent. In the second use from RN 78 to 84, flutter tonguing functions as a motivic material, a part of build-up for the main climax. A pair of the trumpet and trombone plays flutter tonguing in opposite directions, trumpet ascending and trombone descending (Ex.2.19). The flutter tonguing is played only with the “three-note chromatic motif” (Motif 2-1) segments, both upward and downward.
Ex. 2.19: Use of flutter tonguing

Gubaidulina achieves a remarkable timbral transformation in variation V. The tutti, the undulating chordal motion by vibraphone, sustained celesta, and muted viola, represents a shimmering celestial image. Crotales, chimes, and tam-tam add diverse metallic tone colors to this surreal resonance. The three-time entrances of the other strings, also muted and contoured by a crescendo-decrescendo fragment, magnify the expressive timbral richness in the passage.

The tone color of variation VI differs from the other variations because of the pizzicato strings and the flutter tonguing woodwinds and brass. Combined with the irregularly accented septuplet rhythm, this long pizz. section contrasts with the static, sustained harmonic quality of variation V.

Most importantly, the two soloists are set in two contrasting timbre throughout the piece. Viola 1, mainly staying in a high register, emphasizes pure and light tone as it characterizes a heavenly sphere. Meanwhile, viola 2, mainly staying in a low register, produces dark and rich tone as it represents an earthly existence. In addition to this registral difference, non-traditional sounds that assigned differently to each viola - harmonics (for viola 1), tremolo (for viola 2), and sul ponticello (for both) - increase more timbral contrast between them.
2.4.2 Dynamics and texture

The table below gives an overview of dynamic use in each section. The dynamic range gradually moves between *pp* and *fff* for both tutti and solo. The loud tutti at the beginning contrasts with the soft solo ending in both texture and volume.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>RN</th>
<th>Tutti</th>
<th>Solo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td><em>ff:f</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a-1</td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td><em>p:ff:f</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a-2</td>
<td>8-11</td>
<td><em>f:ff:mf</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>12-15</td>
<td><em>f</em></td>
<td><em>p:f</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>a/a-1/a-2</td>
<td>15-26</td>
<td>same to Var.I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c</td>
<td>27-36</td>
<td><em>pp:fp:mf:pf</em></td>
<td><em>p:mf:fp:pf</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>37-39</td>
<td><em>p:fp</em></td>
<td><em>f</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a-3</td>
<td>40-45</td>
<td><em>p:fp:fp</em></td>
<td><em>p:f</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d-1</td>
<td>46-48</td>
<td><em>f:ff</em></td>
<td><em>f</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>49-56</td>
<td><em>p:mf:pf</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e-1</td>
<td>57-60</td>
<td><em>p:fp:mf</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>61-65</td>
<td><em>ff:ff</em></td>
<td><em>ff:ff:ff:pp</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>66-69</td>
<td><em>pp:p</em></td>
<td><em>p</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g-1</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td><em>pp:p</em></td>
<td><em>p:f:p</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>75-78</td>
<td><em>pp:pf:pf:mf</em></td>
<td><em>mp</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h-1</td>
<td>79-84</td>
<td><em>p:ff</em></td>
<td><em>p:ff:fff</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i</td>
<td>85</td>
<td><em>ff</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>a-4</td>
<td>86-88</td>
<td><em>ff:ff</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
<td>89-91</td>
<td><em>pp:p</em></td>
<td><em>p:ff:mf:p</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k</td>
<td>92-109</td>
<td><em>p:mp:pf:mf</em></td>
<td><em>Va. 1</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.3: Dynamic transition in each section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Coda)</th>
<th>g-2</th>
<th>110-116</th>
<th>pp-p-ff-p</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>k-1</td>
<td>117-118</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two soloists share identical dynamics in general except for variation IV and variation VII. In variation VI, the solo part acquires the widest dynamic range from $p$ to $fff$ (Section h-1), building up the climax at RN 84. In the following two sections, the tutti climax unfolds in $ff$ and reaches to the maximum volume ($fff$). This orchestral climax at RN 86-88 provides maximum intensity with massive texture played by the whole parts (Ex.2.20). All brass, percussion, and piano join the polyphonic chordal ostinato while the woodwinds and strings double the main theme in expanded tessitura. The enormous tutti occurs once more in later section (Section g-2) with added celesta and bar chimes, without strings.

* Although Gubaidulina does not specify a coda in the piece, I shall regard the last two sections as coda. I explain the reason in 2.5.7 Variation VII, p34.
Ex. 2.20: Use of maximum dynamic
There are several points where a dynamic contrast occurs. In the transition from variation III to variation IV, the orchestra builds up tension at the end of variation III reaching the \textit{ff}. Yet, the soloists at the following bars in variation IV play in \textit{p}, which creates an unexpected sudden dynamic drop. Another contrast occurs between the two soloists in variation IV: the pairing motif (Motif 5) consists of viola 2 in \textit{p} and viola 1 in \textit{f}.

In addition, the orchestra at the climax (RN 88) contrasts with the next solo section, creating a dramatic transition from \textit{fff} to \textit{pp}.

The main orchestral theme appears homophonic in the first variation, in which the strings lead the melody and the woodwinds double it. The string section with expanded division up to 11 parts plays the second entrance of the theme (RN 5) either in unison or octave doubling. This initial homophony becomes more polyphonic in later variations. In variation III, the strings and the woodwinds move independently as the main theme in the woodwinds overlap with the other motivic phrase in the strings. This overlapping technique enables more polyphonic texture in several places where the orchestra plays separate parts from each other. More polyphonic complexity appears in variation VI and finally, the climax (RN 86-88) in variation VII demonstrates the most extreme polyphonic writing for the entire orchestra.
2.5. Description of each variation

2.5.1 Variation I

The first variation presents the main orchestral theme in the dramatic, massive, fast, and brisk musical gestures. After the orchestra unfolds the aggressive and large-scale main theme three times, the quiet and static solo part follows. The tutti part is comprised of three small sections.

Section a: RN 0-3 (tutti)

The orchestra begins with the main motif of an ascending m2 and P5 (Motif 1) in a sequence from high to low register across the entire instrumentation. The main theme is connected to the descending chromatic scale by the piano and the ascending chromatic scale by the clarinet and flute. A triplet appears as the main rhythmic element. The melodic progression is based on ascending and descending semitones and a P5.

Section a-1: RN 4-7 (tutti)

The main theme recurs in a different mode of softer volume (p) and lighter texture by the solo instruments. New rhythmic figures built by quintuplet and septuplet appear in the celesta, vibraphone and piano. Tritone-based melodic progression in the string and the three-note chromatic motif in the woodwind (Motif 2) occur. With the massive crescendo build-up, RN 5 presents the main theme in ff, lengthened by one more bar. From bar 31, a new theme starts in a different metrical system (2/4), based on the three-note chromatic motif. This section involves the whole woodwind, brass, and percussion. The poly-rhythmic phrases add more rhythmic complexity.
**Section a-2: RN 8-11 (tutti)**

The third entrance of the main theme presented by low strings occurs in opposite direction from low to high register, with adding a series of quintuplet diatonic scales. The main theme is altered by a m2 and a D3 (diminished 3rd). Meanwhile, the woodwinds and brass continue the same material from the previous section in duple meter. This combination of the main theme from section a and section a-1 proceeds with alternating metrical changes, and closes the tutti part.

**Section b: RN 12-15 (solo)**

A short silence (G.P.) disconnects the solo part from the orchestra. The first introduction of the soloists begins with quiet, slow, and static motion, which contrasts to the previous tutti part. The two soloists play independently in opposite directions: viola 1 in upward motion and viola 2 in downward motion. Starting on the closest m2 (viola 2 on C5 and viola 1 on Db5), the two soloists move in opposite directions and finally end on the farthest tritone (viola 2 on C#3 and viola 1 on G7). This contradictory progression of the two violas symbolically demonstrates their opposite paths.

2.5.2 Variation II

Another silence (G.P.) precedes the second variation which duplicates the tutti part of variation I. The solo part develops more rhythmic and timbral variety in the longer and extended section.

**Repetition of Section a, a-1, a-2: RN 15-26 (tutti)**

The tutti repeats the same three sections from the first variation.
Section c: RN 27-36 (solo)

The solo part, as in the first variation, enters after a silence that is not a general pause but precisely timed 2.5 seconds. Different from the first variation, the soloists involve orchestral solo instruments – fl, vib, cel, vc, b.cl - in the accompanying parts. Here viola 1 presents the main motif, mutated from an ascending m2 (C5-Db5) to a descending M7 (C5-Db4). Viola 2 responds with a new motif (Motif 3) that derives from the orchestral main theme made by a m2 and a M3, with the same rhythmic unit. As Gubaidulina explains in the program note, “the interaction between the soloists becomes more like a dialogue than a conflict”\(^\text{15}\). They communicate with each other, imitating their motivic figures in the same middle register. That interplay continuously changes the meter and tempo, alternating crotchet = 60 and 72, and finally ends at 80. In this variation, rhythmic complexity by combination of quintuplet, septuplet, and their variables abound more than in the previous variations. The melodic figures contain not only more intervallic applications of m6, M6, and M7 but also large leaps and consecutive leaping motions, which contrasts to the previous variation. More dynamic variety occurs in the range of \(p - f\).

2.5.3 Variation III

Unlike the previous variations in which the solo part is disconnected from the tutti part by a silence, variation III combines the orchestra with the soloists rather than divides them into independent parts. The tutti and solo communicate as question and answer, sharing motivic elements. The tempo alternates frequently between slow and fast. This variation

\(^{15}\) Sofia Gubaidulina, Ibid.
focuses on the harmonic aspect rather than the melodic, which emphasizes more vertical quality than horizontal.

Section d: RN 37-39

The first section of variation III introduces a new motif (Motif 4) comprised of the same rhythmic and intervallic combination from the main motif in variation I. This motif dominates in both the tutti and solo part throughout the variation. Following the short tutti, the solo part appears with a legato triplet passage in which each melodic fragment is almost identical. The accompanying cello and contrabass move diatonically within D to F, while the solo oboe and solo clarinet move by descending hexachord (F-E-D-C-B-Bb). At the end of the section, the piccolo, flute, and marimba recall Motif 1 that is extended to a leaping motion by a M7 (A-G#), preceding the main orchestral theme in the next section.

Section a-3: RN 40-45

The main orchestral theme recurs three times, reduced in length and modified by the strings playing pizzicato chords. As the theme repeats three times and combined with the other elements, the texture becomes more complicated. Between the tutti passages, brief solo phrases are inserted along with several orchestral solo instruments.

Section d-1: RN 46-48

The soloists repeat the same triplet motif from section b in reduced length. From RN 47, the strings repeat the static diatonic phrases from section b with an extended, massive, polyrhythmic sonority in a new metric unit (6/8). The three-note chromatic motif occurs in the solo clarinet.
2.5.4 Variation IV

An abrupt silence detaches variation IV from variation III. Unlike the other variations, it is the solo part that initiates the fourth variation and leads the tutti. Variation IV develops more than previous variations: the tutti part changes rhythm and texture in reduced length and different timbre without the brass. Meanwhile, the soloists present a new motif (Motif 5) played in pairs. This motif appears both in the solo and the orchestral part, each in pairs and in different tempi. The soloists finally close this variation with a transparent tremolo.

**Section e: RN 49-56**

Viola 2 initiates the first part of the pairing motif and viola 1 responds with the second part as question and answer. In the next phrase, viola 2 descends by semitones with accompaniment of the bass flute. The following tutti phrase (RN 53) imitates the pairing motif transposed by an upper m2. From RN 55 the strings recall the thematic materials from variation I, modified in a different rhythm and texture.

**Section e-1: RN 57-60**

In a faster tempo (crotchet =84), the soloists repeat the pairing motif transposed by an upper m2. The tutti, involving only the strings, produces lighter texture. At RN 60, only viola 2 plays the second part of the motif without the first part by viola 1. The tempo returns to slow (60).

**Section f: RN 61-65**

Viola 2 imitates the viola 1 melody as if trying to resemble its counterpart. With small accompaniments, both violas ascend to the higher register in a gradual *crescendo*. After the climatic moment in fortissimo, each viola slowly moves oppositely by semitones, to
arrive at the farthest bipolar positions: viola 1 the highest and viola 2 the lowest. The closing passage in *sul ponticello* foreshadows a timbral transformation in the next variation.

2.5.5 Variation V

Variation V introduces a new orchestral theme of undulating ostinato in pianissimo. This variation differs from the other variations for the distinctive timbral effect by chordal progression in the metallic percussion and the muted strings, which creates an ethereal resonance. In this special treatment of tone color, the two soloists achieve the most expressive moment in which they cross each other and exchange their registers. There is no metric or tempo change in this variation. The volume remains soft (*pp-p*) for both the tutti and the solo.

**Section g: RN 66-69**

The orchestra plays the ostinato chordal motif (Motif 6), a series of second-inversion minor triads undulating by semitones. Only the strings and the percussion involve in the tutti part. The first phrase of the solo part imitates the wavy figures as if it assimilates to the unique sound mass.

**Section g-1: RN 70-74**

While the tutti continues the undulating passage, viola 1 and 2 follow each contradictory path through the diapason: viola 1, starting on the highest pitch (C7), descends; viola 2, starting on the lowest pitch (C3), ascends. The two meet on the center of each path (A5), building a three-note cluster (*G#-A-Bb*) derived from the three-note chromatic motif. In the third phrase, they attempt crossing each other to attain the counterpart’s register – the
lowest range for viola 1 and the highest for viola 2. This contrary motion by each viola manifests a geographical cross: viola 1 from C#7 to C3 and viola 2 from C3 to C#7 (see Fig.3.1 in chapter 3). This dramatic moment represents as if the two characters reconcile with each other by exchanging their tessituras.

2.5.6 Variation VI

Variation VI overlaps with the last part of variation V. The main orchestral theme appears only in the short fragment by the piano. Instead, a sequence of new rhythmic pattern based on ascending chromatic scale occurs by the contrabass and continues by the other strings. The soloists introduce a new rhythmic pattern built by septuplet (Motif 7), which is a principle component in this variation. Beginning at RN 79, both viola 1 and viola 2 ascend to the climax, imitating each other.

Section h: RN 75-78

In the first four bars, the piano recalls the main theme transposed by a descending M3 (C-Db-F-C). At the same time, the contrabass plays a one-bar rhythmic ostinato phrase in pizzicato, by which the static mode in the previous variation turns to a motoric quality. The undulating chordal feature from variation V remains in the percussion and celesta, yet, not undulating but gradually descending to the end. The soloists play septuplet passages that emphasize randomly stressed pizzicato rhythm. Viola 2 plays more complicated combinations of triplet and septuplet. The following tutti strings adopt and develop the septuplet motif from RN 78.
Section h-1: RN 79-84
Each part of the strings plays polyphonically the septuplet motif in various rhythmic combinations. The other tutti parts recall motivic segments from the main motif (Motif 1) and the three-note chromatic motif (Motif 2). Contrasting to the pizzicato timbre in tutti, the soloists play a long legato passage consisting of large ascending leaps. Viola 1 pursues its legato phrase with no break, although viola 2 interrupts viola 1 with fragments of imitative gestures. Together with the tutti build-up toward the climax, both soloists ascend to the same highest note, during which they struggle with each other and increase conflict and tension. At the end of the section, they reach the apex in the maximum volume of fff.

Section i: RN 85 (tutti)
The whole orchestra repeats a short fortissimo phrase that encompasses the whole diapason four times with silences between them. Each time the phrases and the silence decrease in length, which enables the orchestra to gain momentum toward the climax. The following general pause amplifies dramatic tension, preceding the magnificent finale movement.

2.5.7 Variation VII
The orchestra, continued from the powerful climax, explodes in the last variation. The main theme appears with the undulating chordal theme from variation V, complicated by a different rhythms and dynamics. Following the gigantic, loud, and lively tutti part, the calm, ambiguous, and transparent solo part enters. The long solo section overlaps with the final exposition of the tutti that fades in and out like a remembrance of the main
theme from the previous variations. Ultimately, the soloists finish the entire piece in a final serene moment. The last two sections can be classified as a coda in a sense of reprising the thematic materials from the previous sections in miniature.

Section a-4: RN 86-88 (tutti)
The whole brass and percussion play a two-bar ostinato that sounds like magnificent fanfare. All orchestra polyphonically play motivic fragments from the other variations: the brass and piano recall the harmonic material from variation V and the percussion borrow the pitch material from variation I. While the brass and percussion continue the ostinato passage, the woodwinds and strings play the main motif transposed by an upper m3 (G-Ab-C-G). The massive overwhelming moment ends with four-time scalar runs, both ascending and descending in the maximum volume (ff-fff).

Section j: RN 89-91
This short bridge section closes the huge tutti climax and transfers to the next solo part. A series of crosswise fragments played by the soloists create an intense cadence together with the muted strings descending chromatically. They explore the three-octave diapason from Ab6 to A3 while the dynamic level instantly turns to p. Meanwhile, the celesta ascends chromatically in a sequence of sextuplet pattern. The timpani plays the rhythmic segment of the main motif and ends the section with tremolo along with the tam-tam.

Section k: RN 92-109 (solo)
This long soloists section concludes the entire piece in a tranquil and meditative ambiance. In a slow tempo and in pianissimo, viola 2 presents a three-bar ostinato built by a seven-note descending chromatic scale from G3 to C#3 with trills on every note. A bowed marimba creates drone reverberation that assists viola 2, which repeats three times.
Viola 1 answers with a series of brief motivic gestures derived from the main motif, accompanied by the low tuba and piano. The two violas proceed with their different paths during five times of alternating appearance. Viola 2 repeats the ostinato phrase in the same format without changing the tempo (crotchet= 84); on the contrary, viola 1 continuously develops the motivic cell as it proceeds toward the cadenza at RN 106. More orchestral parts participate in accompanying the long viola 1 passage, in which the range is extended from low G to high Ab and the tempo is gradually accelerated (96-108-120). At the end of the section, viola 1 achieves the culmination on the highest position as Gubaidulina says, “gradually reaching the extremes of its highest register.”

Section g-2: RN 110-116 (tutti)

Overlapped with the highest Ab in viola 1, the tutti announces the last statement of the undulating chordal motif from variation V combined with the main motif from variation I in a different form. The whole orchestra forges a crescendo passage from pp to ff in a faster tempo (120-144), which creates an intense blast and then fades away.

Section k-1: RN 117-118 (solo)

This brief final section ends with the two soloists’ restatement, reprising the ostinato phrase from section i in a slower tempo. In this ending, the two violas reaffirm their two opposing paths by contrasting their tessituras: viola 1 in the highest register and viola 2 in the lowest register. They finally rest with more rhythmic freedom in rubato phrases. Each viola plays a nine-second phrase twice with a silence (G.P.) between them, along with the sustaining percussion and low strings.

---

16 Sofia Gubaidulina, Ibid.
CHAPTER 3

SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION

Symbolism has been used to characterize Gubaidulina’s music. In an interview with Vera Lukomsky, Gubaidulina states that “I like very much the idea of instrumental symbolism, when the instrument itself, its nature and individuality, hints at or implies a certain meaning. The instrument’s quality and the meaning of music join each other... I wanted to find the idea of the cross in the instruments themselves.” Hence, symbolic expression, especially for religious ideas, is an important factor to Gubaidulina’s aesthetic.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the symbolic aspect in the music of Gubaidulina. As explained in several interviews, she symbolizes religious subjects such as the cross, crucifixion, resurrection, and transfiguration which serve as central subjects in her music. The religious metaphors are represented by several musical devices that apply to most of her works. I shall explain the symbolic material used in Two Paths in terms of three aspects – dichotomy, the cross, and transfiguration.

3.1 Dichotomy

The concept of binary opposition has been represented as a significant thematic element through Gubaidulina’s musical life. Many of her works treat the subject of dichotomy as the initial motif. The titles indicating the contradiction are *Hell und Dunkel* (Light and Darkness) (1976), *Garden of Joy and Sorrow* (1980), *Pro et Contra* (1989), *Pari Dispari* (Even and Uneven) (1991), ...*The Deceitful Face of Hope and Despair* (2005). In addition, most of her works implicate an antithetical subject as the philosophic premise. Although the idea is not expressed directly, it defines the common narrative and overall characteristics of the music. The idea of dichotomy is based on Gubaidulina’s theological vision, in which heaven and earth, the divine and human coexist with contradictory natures.

Not only for the conceptual aspects but also for the musical aspects Gubaidulina’s music utilizes antithetical idioms. In *In Croce* (1979), the two instruments - cello and organ - musically envision a symbolic dichotomy, in which the idea of light and darkness is represented by the contrasting sounds between both instruments. As Enzo Restagno says, “the two solo instruments represent two poles of an irreconcilable situation..... The cello and organ constitute two dramaturgically-opposite poles... At the moment of initial opposition, the organ and cello contrast by way of register, harmony, articulation and texture.”

Interplaying with each other, the cello and organ exchange the contrasting sound materials. At the end, each part is transformed to the other parts’ role by exchanging their symbolic characteristics, light to darkness and vice versa. In *Perception* (1983), the concept of contrast between sound and silence is realized. According to

---

Valentina Cholopova, “the antitheses “voices/always/again” and “voices/silence” become the important exit points in the structure of the composition, which is asserted by means of unusually long pauses.”

In Two Paths, the two solo violas reproduce the antithesis between divinity and humanity, represented by the contrasting types of love of Mary and Martha. To demonstrate the opposite characteristics of the two parts, Gubaidulina applies an idiomatic device that is illustrated by geometric arrangement, one in a higher position and the other in a lower, in the same method of arranging the cello and organ in In Croce. In Two Paths, viola 1 represents Mary while viola 2 represents Martha: the former tries to reach to the high register as the love aims for godliness; the latter tries to reach to the low register as the love represents worldliness. This registeral setting for the two soloists, however, is different from In Croce. Viola 1 and viola 2 depart from the same middle register, on the two neighboring notes (C5-Db5), and move independently in opposite directions until they reach to the farthest minor second (C#3-D7) at the end. By presenting the upward and downward motion, each viola clearly defines their opposite natures in the beginning.

Throughout the entire variations, the two soloists struggle to reconcile the conflict between them, which sometimes interferes with and sometimes complements each other. In the fifth variation, viola 1 descends from the highest to the lowest and viola 2 ascends from the lowest to the highest, passing the center of each diapason crosswise, which manifests a symbolic cross geometrically. The most dramatic antithesis occurs in the

---

final variation: viola 1 continues its path to reach to the highest extent while viola 2 remains in the lowest ostinato phrase (Ex. 3.1). In the last section, the two characters finally achieve their goals by confirming each territory. This conclusion of each viola apparently indicates the dichotomous nature of the sacred and the profane love. The tutti part also involves in the conflict between high and low register by two contrasting groups: in variation VI, Gubaidulina sets two levels of orchestral range - high and low - and divides the orchestra into two groups. Each group moves in opposite directions toward each other, passing crosswise, and reaching the farthest poles at the end. Thus, dichotomy serves as a predominant theme of Two Paths.

Ex. 3.1: Timbral contrast between two soloists

3.2 The cross

The symbol of the cross appears as a central metaphor in several of Gubaidulina’s works. The most uses of musical symbolization of the cross unfold in Seven Words (1982) in which Gubaidulina utilizes several symbolic devices to depict the image of the cross. As Caroline M. Askew says in her dissertation, “the realization of the symbol of the cross in several manifestations forms the essential dramatic design and climax of the work.”20 This principle also applies to Gubaidulina’s other compositions including Two

---

20 Caroline M. Askew. Ibid: 393
Paths. In general, three ways of realizing the symbol of the cross occur in her works. First is an instrumental crossing achieved by string glissandos, which visualizes the image of the cross; second is registeral crossing performed by two contrasting parts, which creates geographical crossroads; third is melodic cross motif comprised of four notes, which shapes a cruciform.

In *Two Paths*, the visual crossing by string glissandos does not apply. Instead, Gubaidulina employs the registeral crossing and the melodic cross motif. The registeral crossing occurs twice: one by the two solo violas in variation V and the other by the two orchestral groups in variation VI. Beginning at RN 70, the two soloists attempt to unify, explore, and exchange opposite tessitura with each other. During this process of moving in opposite directions - viola 1, descending from C#7 to C3 and viola 2, ascending from C3 to C#7, they pass crosswise at bar 369-370. Figure 3.1 illustrates the geographical cross by the two soloists.

As Gubaidulina mentions in the program note, variation VI introduces another geographical crossroad formed by two orchestral groups in two opposing registers - high and low. Beginning with the celesta on C7 and the contrabass on C1, the high-register
group (the celesta and piano) descends while the low-register group (the contrabass and viola, extended by the cello and violin) ascends. Each group moves toward each other, passing crosswise, and reaches the opposite poles, the violin on C7 and the piano on C1. The manifestation of the registeral cross is illustrated in the example below.

![Registeral cross by the orchestra](image)

Figure 3.2: Registeral cross by the orchestra

Askew used the term, a ‘melodic cross motif’, as she quotes from Alexander Ivashkin who mentions the motif of semitone-related four notes (C-B-Db-C) in Gubaidulina’s *String Quartet No. 4* (1993) as “the figure of the cross.”²¹ In *Two Paths*, Gubaidulina utilizes the same melodic cross motif consisting of the same interval frame, E-F-D♯-E (Fig. 3.3.a), which appears at the third entrance of the main motif in variation I (RN 8). Now, Gubaidulina invents another cross motif in *Two Paths*, which seems closer to the shape of a cross: the prime motif, E-F-A-E (Fig. 3.3.b). This cross motif dominates the whole music as an essential rudiment both musically and thematically.

Transfiguration

Gubaidulina understands the concept of transfiguration in relation to her theological interpretation. “I think that transfiguration is what we most desire in the creative process because this transfiguration into something completely different is what unites us with our creator.”

This transfiguration can be realized musically by transformation of sounds. In other words, certain timbral changes idiomatically play symbolic roles in her music. Gubaidulina employs this strategy of aural transformation to represent a transformation of status from one dimension to another, particularly from secular world to heavenly bliss. In the interview with Vera Lukomsky, Gubaidulina mentions the term in explaining her work, Hommage a T.S. Eliot (1987): “Its climax (in the last movement) draws on a moment of Transfiguration.... this is death and the radiant arising of something new: that is, the Transfiguration.”

She also comments about Offertorium (1986) in another interview with Vera Lukomsky: “The main event of the concerto, the Transfiguration, is in the coda: Frederick’s theme appears in its complete

---


shape, but in retrograde motion, and nobody can recognize it.”

Thus, Gubaidulina symbolizes the Transfiguration as a thematic transformation.

In general, the technique of transfiguration is musically achieved by sonic transformation such as harmonics and sul ponticello. Gubaidulina explains the meaning and the way of sonic transfiguration she uses in Rejoice! (1981, revised in 1988):

The theme of my work Rejoice! is the metaphorical presentation of the transition to another reality, expressed by means of the juxtaposition of normal notes and harmonics. The string instrument’s ability to produce notes of different pitch at the same position on the string cab be experienced musically as a transition to another level of reality. And such an experience is nothing other than joy... it is a question of experiencing these sounds not merely as a timbre, a colour effect, a veil before something, but also as that thing’s very essence, the essence of its form as a “transfiguration”. 

Seven Words (1982) contains the same function of aural transfiguration in more various forms and instrumental techniques. Askew explains the transfiguration of sound quality from ordinary to sul ponticello and back to ordinary in relation to the concept of the cross: “Gubaidulina combines the image of the cross in the notation with aural transfiguration of the sound quality... The idea of ‘crossing over’, from one dimension to another, is suggested by the use of contrasting cello techniques.... The visual appearance

of the cross (in the form of the little cruciforms on the page) is transfigured into a sonic manifestation.”

Askew also points out that the timbral effect of harmonics used in the last movement would be a transition to a celestial dimension: “The ethereal sound world of this movement, signifying the transformation to the heavenly sphere, is realized by the inclusion of harmonics in the musical material, and the elevated register of the instruments.”

Thus, Gubaidulina uses the transfiguration as a symbolization of the two spheres - earthly and heavenly. The same function of transfiguration also appears in *In Croce, String Quartet No.3*, and *Garden of Joy and Sorrow*.

In *Two Paths*, Gubaidulina applies the sonic transformation in several ways, most of which create timbral contrast between viola 1 and viola 2. The first transition from ordinary note to harmonics occurs in the first solo section in variation I, in which viola 1 transforms the timbre on the same note, Bb5 (Ex.3.2).

![Timbral transformation of viola 1](image)

Ex. 3.2: Timbral transformation of viola 1

This harmonics passage represents the transfer of viola 1 from earthly to celestial existence, as if it reflects the divine love of God. At the end of variation IV (RN 65), viola 1 shifts to sul ponticello in the highest register. This transformation occurs again on

---

27 Caroline M. Askew. Ibid: 159.
the same note, Bb6, after a long phrase ascending to the high register. In contrast, viola 2 plays sul tasto tremolo in the lower register representing worldly love (Ex.3.3).

Ex. 3.3: Timbral contrast in solo part

The opposing conflict between the two characters recurs in the next variation at RN 67: viola 1 in harmonics and viola 2 in ordinary notes. Throughout variation V the two violas cross each other and finally exchange the register. Although viola 2 resembles viola 1 and achieves a registeral peak, it is not transformed to harmonics, which means that viola 2 still remains in the earthly sphere. In variation VI (RN 77), however, viola 2 plays a sul ponticello phrase which seems to imply that the worldly love attempts to reach the sublime heavenly level. The sul ponticello applies to both viola 1 and 2 at RN 89, in which both play a sequence of short fragments descending from high to low register. In the last and the lowest fragment, the transformation turns to normal state, both in ordinary tone (Ex.3.4).

Ex. 3.4: Timbral transformation of viola 2
Variation VII does not include any timbral transformation. Viola 1, having its cadenza at RN 106, continues to ascend and, at the end, it reaches the highest notes throughout the entire piece (Ex.3.5). This ending without harmonics looks different than Gubaidulina’s previous works with idiomatic timbral setting of aural transformation for the ending. However, *Two Paths* demonstrates the same concept of transfiguration in a different way to represent the intrinsic conflict between viola 1 (heavenly) and viola 2 (earthly) by timbral and registeral contrasts. Only muted strings and sustaining percussion accompany viola 1. Despite no transformation to harmonics, viola 1 finally turns to a state of transfiguration in terms of its pure and ethereal sound in the highest range. In contrast, viola 2 ends on the earthly level along with the low and dark sonority.

Ex. 3.5: Transfiguration of viola 1

In variation V, an orchestral transfiguration occurs, which contrasts with the other variations in timbre. The transformation of tone color is performed by the metallic
percussion, celesta, and muted strings, creating a light, transparent, and mysterious resonance in tranquil undulating ostinato (Ex.3.6).

Ex. 3.6: Timbral transformation in tutti part

The similar celestial sonority appears in Gubaidulina’s other works. As Askew describes in the analysis of Seven Words, “The muted sound quality of the string ensemble (playing con sordino) and the fluid texture of their undulating tremolo lines further extends the metaphor of passing over to a divine kingdom.”

Therefore, timbral transformation serves as an important symbolic device in Gubaidulina’s music. In Two

28 Caroline M. Askew. Ibid: 159.
Paths she employs transfiguration for both solo and tutti, representing a celestial image and ultimately, a divine and eternal heaven.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

For Gubaidulina, music is a religious act to worship God, from which she delivers her aesthetic value. Her strong belief has become the most powerful stimulus to inspire her music. Alfred Schnittke describes her persistent musical aesthetic:

From her first pieces, Sofia Gubaidulina revealed in her music an unusual stylistic unity, a highly original spiritual world and an unbending composer’s will. Her extreme self-criticism compels her to spend much time on polishing the most minute detail - which, however, leads not to superficial elegance but to strict asceticism. Her music is well integrated and devoid of all compromise. Such is the composer herself.\(^\text{29}\)

Her consistent pursuit of spirituality distinguishes her music for its symbolic, mystical, profound, and meditative nature. It is also remarkable that Gubaidulina persists in her stylistic unity for over thirty years, demonstrating a strong consistency in her works. The most fundamental denominator in her works is contrast—both symbolic and

musical – between two opposite ideas. Gubaidulina’s compositional strategies are based on this contrasting method, which reveals as thematic, structural, textural, registeral, dynamic and timbral contrast. Another important aspect is her use of silence.

Gubaidulina has treated silence as an important structural and symbolic element, sometimes bringing to an extreme extent as used in her symphony *Stimmen... Verstummen* ...(1986) where the ninth movement comprises only a silence with conductor’s solo gestures.

In terms of voice leading, Gubaidulina’s works demonstrate a similar melodic structure based on stepwise motions. This motion by semitones may be influenced by Russian Orthodox chant tradition, in which leaping motions are regarded as improper intervals. Although Gubaidulina does not intend to apply that tradition to her music, it is obvious that semitones and a trichord [0, 1, 2] dominate her music as primary pitch cells in general. Related to this motion by steps, the importance of a direction, upward or downward, means a symbolic device in her music. The aspect of direction and registral arrangement determines the overall structural design.

Other than her applications of formal proportion by Fibonacci and other additive series, idiomatic timbral devices – harmonics, glissando, sul ponticello, and con sordino, which are symbolically used in relation to sonic transformation – also give a unity to her musical style. Symbolizing the image of the cross, in various forms of both visual cruciform in the score and aural effect, is also her impressive trademark. To add,

* Gerrard McBurney notes, “In the Orthodox tradition, harmonic or ‘gapped’ intervals (third and upwards) have always been regarded as dangerous and insecure. They are all to different degrees *intervallic diabolic*. Most religious chants move only by step, always choosing the note nearest to hand whether above or below.” program note for *Offertorium* (September 1991, pp3-4) Quoted in Caroline M. Askew, Ibid: 103.
Gubaidulina’s musical style tends to a dramaturgical setting by symbolic roles, extreme tension, transparent texture, expressionistic sonority, and ethereal ending with harmonics.

Two Paths contains these features, particularly focused on representing the opposing theme. Gubaidulina employs symbolic devices such as the image of the cross and transfiguration, which are musically achieved by melodic cross motif, registral crossroads, and timbral transformation. Compared to her previous religious titles, Rejoice (1981) and Seven Words (1982), the idioms of the cross and transfiguration do not appear as much as in them. Rather, Gubaidulina lays emphasis on the metaphor of dichotomy in Two Paths and establishes diverse contrasting devices. Silence, pause, and other special effects, together with her mastery of orchestration, elaborate the dramatic expressions.

In its symbolic interpretation, Two Paths reflects Gubaidulina’s view on dichotomy. The two viola’s role represents sacred love and worldly love respectively. Throughout the piece, the two characters identify their contrasting natures, sometimes resembling each other and sometimes struggling with each other. At the end, after the long process of attempting reconciliation, their ultimate goals are finally achieved by reaching the opposite poles – the highest and the lowest, celestial and earthly dimensions. This symbolic setting based on binary opposition has been characteristic in Gubaidulina’s other works. In her experiment with quarter-tone temperament in Music for Flute and Strings (1995), Gubaidulina applied the same opposite symbolizations for the two parts, as she explains:

I understand it as a unification of two spaces: the first is the twelve-semitonal space, and the second is another twelve-semitonal space a
quartetone higher. For me this is a metaphor of the image and its shadow, or a day and a night.... I like the episode in *Music for Flute and Strings* where one space (a group tuned one quarter tone lower) moves up, whereas another space (a group tuned conventionally) moves down. These spaces move crosswise, but do not “notice” each other.”  

On the other hand, the antithesis in her music can be interpreted in relation to the metaphor of transfiguration, a transitional moment from ordinary world to sublime. Askew interprets Gubaidulina’s *String Quartet No. 4* (1993) as an example of transfiguration according to Alexander Ivashkin’s program note:

>The conflict between the opposing pitch areas is a key feature of the work, and a consistent aspect of Gubaidulina’s music in general. The contrast from one pitch area to the other, between the metaphorical ‘image’ and its ‘shadow’, may be a further symbolic representation of the transfigurative phenomena, the passage between alternate spheres of existence, from an earthly reality (day), to a further dimension, the celestial sphere (night).  

Thus, the transfiguration implicates an unchangeable attribute of dichotomy between mundane dimension and ethereal dimension. At the same time, the transfiguration is a conclusive resolution of the conflict between the two opposites and a goal to persist finally achieved by a spiritual transformation. And most of all, the

---

transfiguration becomes the most dramatic and blissful moment in the piece. In *Two Paths*, the transfiguration occurs by sonic transformation with idiomatic devices: harmonics (only by viola 1) and sul ponticello by the soloists; con sordino and pizzicato by the orchestra.

Understanding those extra-musical meanings would make it more interesting to appreciate Gubaidulina’s music. Her aesthetic of combining craftsmanship with spiritual narrative produces musical works of great power. Gubaidulina always strives for creating new ways of expression, as she states, “My desire is always to rebel, to swim against the stream! To swim against the stream for me means to introduce seriousness in art.”

Gubaidulina is one of few contemporary composers who establish her own musical identity, unique and genuine. Her remarkable compositional techniques employed in a variety of genres, and most of all, her effort to integrate musical perspective with philosophical dimension represents her important contribution to the art of music.

---

REFERENCES

BOOKS AND DISSERTATIONS


ARTICLES AND REVIEWS


**SCORES AND SOUND RECORDINGS**


